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PTQ4287

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	CTME-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DATE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01
	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OES-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	EPAE-00	ECA-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00		/010W			

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O 102238Z DEC 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8925
INFO DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
OPEC COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 003947

DEPT ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, S/S-O/DS, AND DS/DSS/ITA
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NSC FOR LLORENS
ENERGY FOR DAVID PHUMPHREY, ANDREA LOCKWOOD, MICHELLE
BILLIG, AND BART MARCOIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2012
TAGS: EPET, PGOV, ECON, ASEC, VE
SUBJECT: ENERGY SECTOR: STRIKE DAY NINE

REF: CARACAS 3931

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM FREDERICK B. COOK, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

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1. (C) ON DAY NINE OF THE GENERAL STRIKE, THE ENERGY SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE. THE PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA (PDVSA) OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO CLAIM NEAR COMPLETE ADHERENCE TO THE STRIKE WITH PRODUCTION FACILITIES, REFINERIES, AND SHIPPING ALL INOPERATIVE OR CLOSE TO IT. THERE ARE MULTIPLE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ABOUT GOV EFFORTS TO ASSUME CONTROL OF PDVSA FACILITIES AS WELL AS A REPORT OF A PDVSA EMPLOYEE ARRESTED AT THE AMUAY PART OF THE PARAGUANA REFINING COMPLEX. ALTHOUGH SOME DELIVERIES HAVE BEEN MADE TO CARACAS GAS STATIONS, THE DOWNSTREAM MANAGER FOR ONE U.S. COMPANY EXPECTS PROBLEMS AT THE END OF THE WEEK. A U.S. COAL COMPANY EXECUTIVE CALLED TO INFORM US THAT AT LEAST TWO VESSELS BOUND FOR U.S. NORTHEAST UTILITIES ARE ANCHORED OUTSIDE LAKE MARACAIBO, UNABLE TO ENTER THE LAKE. END SUMMARY.

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RUNNING ON EMPTY

2. (C) ECONOFF DISCUSSED THE NATIONAL GASOLINE SITUATION WITH

HE
REPORTED THAT OF [REDACTED] STATIONS IN VENEZUELA, 46
ARE NOW DRY, ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. THE SITUATION IN
CARACAS IS BETTER THAN THAT IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY (THERE
HAVE BEEN SOME DELIVERIES) BUT [REDACTED] EXPECTS PROBLEMS AT
THE END OF THE WEEK IF THE STRIKE DRAGS ON. [REDACTED] NOTED
THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE PETROLEUM WHOLESALERS CHAMBER MET THE
MORNING OF DECEMBER 9 WITH MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINES VICE
MINISTER BERNARDO ALVAREZ WHO REPORTED THAT THERE WERE FOUR
DAYS OF STOCKS AT THE DISTRIBUTION PLANTS (THROUGH DECEMBER
12). REFINERIES ARE FULL BUT, WITH SHIPPING STILL PARALYZED,
THERE IS NO WAY TO MOVE THE PRODUCT. ALVAREZ NOT SO SUBTLY
TOLD THE WHOLESALERS TO TELL THEIR DEALERS TO STAY OPEN.

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[REDACTED] ADVISED THAT THE WHOLESALERS CHAMBER PLANS TO SEND A LETTER TO THE MINISTRY PROTESTING THE LEGALITY OF DECREE 2.172 AUTHORIZING THE MINISTRY TO TAKE TEMPORARY CONTROL OF GAS STATION OPERATIONS AND GASOLINE DISTRIBUTION (SEE REFFEL).

GOV TAKING CONTROL?

3. (C) THERE ARE NUMEROUS REPORTS ON DECEMBER 10 THAT THE GOV

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 AND/OR GOV SUPPORTERS ARE SEIZING PDVSA FACILITIES. ONE
 HOLDS THAT PDVSA OFFICES IN APURE, BARINAS, MATORIN, MONAGAS
 AND TIJUANA HAVE BEEN &INTERVENED.8 ANOTHER REPORT, FROM A

██████████ WHO IS USUALLY VERY WELL INFORMED, IS THAT
 BOLIVARIAN CIRCLE MEMBERS IN PUERTO ORDAZ HAVE SEIZED THE
 PDVSA ANACO NATURAL GAS FACILITY IN ORDER TO FORCE RESUMPTION
 OF THE GAS FOR THE ALUMINUM AND STEEL INDUSTRIES. ANOTHER
 STORY IS THAT GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS PLANNED TO SEIZE THE
 AMUAY REFINERY ON DECEMBER 10 AND RUN IT WITH A CREW OF
 ENGINEERING STUDENTS. A REPRESENTATIVE OF ██████████

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CONFIRMS THAT A PDVSA EMPLOYEE ENGAGED IN SHUTTING DOWN THE
 LAST UNIT OF THE AMUAY REFINERY WAS ARRESTED ON DECEMBER 10.
 HE ADDED THAT THE MILITARY IS INDEED TAKING CONTROL OF ALL
 PDVSA FACILITIES. WHILE WE CANNOT CONFIRM ALL THESE STORIES,
 IT DOES SEEM CLEAR THAT NUMBERS OF NON-PROFESSIONALS ARE NOW
 DABBING IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PDVSA FACILITIES.

 U.S. ELECTRIC UTILITIES AFFECTED BY THE STRIKE

4. (U) A U.S. EXECUTIVE FOR A COAL COMPANY PRODUCING IN ZULIA
 STATE INFORMED US THAT AT LEAST TWO VESSELS AWAITING COAL
 SHIPMENTS FOR THE U.S. ARE ANCHORED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE

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	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W				

-----15B966 110047Z /38

O 102238Z DEC 02

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8926

INFO DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

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SHIPPING CHANNEL INTO LAKE MARACAIBO. THE FIRST VESSEL IS
WAITING FOR A 39,000 TON LOAD BOUND FOR PORTSMOUTH, NEW
HAMPSHIRE. THE SECOND IS SUPPOSED TO PICK UP 17,000 TONS FOR
AN ELECTRIC UTILITY IN SOMERSET, MASSACHUSETTS. A THIRD
VESSEL (DESTINATION UNKNOWN), ALREADY LOADED WITH 32,000 TONS
OF COAL, IS CURRENTLY ANCHORED INSIDE THE LAKE AND UNABLE TO
MOVE FOR LACK OF A PILOT. U.S. ELECTRIC UTILITIES MAY YET
SUFFER SPOT SHORTAGES IF THE STRIKE CONTINUES.

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